DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 140 299 CS 203 391

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TITLE Montana English Teacher Preparation and Needs, 1973 State-Wide Survey. Interim Report.
INSTITUTION Montana State Univ., Bozeman.
PUB DATE Mar 74
NOTE 19p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Research; *English Instruction; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Needs Assessment; Secondary Education; *State Surveys; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *Montana

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes results from a 1973 survey of Montana junior and senior high school teachers of English. The questionnaires were designed to determine the relation between teaching assignments and training; undergraduate and postgraduate preparation in subject matter courses; teachers' evaluation of the usefulness and applicability of their preparation for teaching; further preparation which teachers desired and were willing to pursue; and program changes needed to meet stated needs and National Council of Teachers of English guidelines for the preparation of teachers. Some 332 teachers returned their questionnaires, out of 750 that were sent out. Results are discussed with particular reference to the development of teacher training programs at the University of Montana and at Montana State University. (AA)

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ED140299

INTERIM REPORT

MARCH, 1974

MONTANA ENGLISH TEACHER PREPARATION AND NEEDS 1973 STATE-WIDE SURVEY

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

CS203391

FOREWORD

This survey report represents a further step toward implementation of the NCTE Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers. In addition, the needs of teachers already in service can better be met with the information we have now gathered and interpreted.

The English Department at Montana State University, with the cooperation of the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Mr. Bill Ferguson, English Supervisor, conducted in 1973 a state-wide survey of all teachers of Junior High and High School English. The mailed questionnaires were set up so as to determine (1) what their teaching assignments were in relation to their training; (2) what specific undergraduate and postgraduate preparation they had had in subject matter courses; (3) how they regarded the usefulness or applicability of that preparation for their teaching; (4) what further preparation they needed, and what they would actually pursue; and (5) what program changes would be required or appropriate to meet their stated needs and the NCTE Guidelines.

More than 330 English teachers returned their questionnaires (43% of those sent out) during October and November. As the responses were being tabulated, we also conducted a series of informal interviews with teachers who came to the MEA-MATE state meeting in Missoula, with some teachers in the Bozeman schools, and with UM and MSU faculty who are involved in English teacher preparation programs. In addition, we had already conferred with other English teachers who came to the state-sponsored workshops at Billings and Great Falls, and these impressions were correlated with the open comments written on the questionnaires. This report, therefore, is based not only upon tabulated data, but also upon trends and patterns of subjective comment, oral and written.

We should note that both the University of Montana and Montana State have increased their priorities for English teaching program development in the last few years. Both have acquired new staff for this purpose, and many program alterations have already been made, both at undergraduate and graduate levels. The University of Montana has revised its M.A. program for the Teaching Option, and MSU, whose share in English teacher preparation has increased markedly in recent years, has already revised its undergraduate Teaching Option and developed extensive plans for a Master's degree program. There is an obvious general need for closer connection between the universities and the schools, not only in terms of improved and appropriate degree programs, but also in terms of mutual information flow and a real provision of resources in the field. Specifics of this general need can now be identified and acted upon.

One of our basic assumptions in undertaking this survey was as follows: there is a much larger and better definable set of needs in the state than has heretofore been shown. We knew that the teachers in service were hurting and that those going into teaching would also be hurting if the present pattern of English Education continued. Historically schools of Education in Montana and elsewhere often were not providing methods courses that were specific and substantial enough in subject matter context and in actual classroom reference. Departments of English for their part often ignored completely the transfer or applicability of English subject instruction into the schools. As a result, prospective teachers got methods only generally related to subject matter, and subject matter that was

both fragmented and divorced form teaching implications. The survey results support these observations. We can now assert more definitely that English teaching methods can best be developed and learned directly in the context of and English course (Literature-Langu ge-Composition), especially if the teaching implications are directly tried in practice and observation. It is clear that excessive compartmentalization, first between English and Education departments, then among the various aspects of English instruction (Literature over here; Comp over there) has produced teachers who are themselves compartmentalized and less able than otherwise to integrate areas of their preparation for any particular teaching task.

If on top of the compartmentalization the overall preparation has been thin, even as a sum total of fragments, then the teachers in the schools must indeed be disadvantaged for their work. It is a tribute to them that they can so often be effective in spite of these obstacles, but as public demand for accountability in output of able students increases, we need the university programs that will bolster the school programs. Both schools and colleges must struggle further to produce graduates who are competent in Language Arts.

The survey has developed a vast amount of information, far beyond what we expected. A more thorough interpretation of the data and comments will come after more people have seen and discussed this interim report. In the meantime,we wish to thank all of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire so thoughtfully, and to acknowledge appreciatively the efforts of the following students and teachers to interpret the data: Jack Beaver, Cathy Granning, Arnina Jardee, and Jeff Tong, for evidence to support hypotheses; Susan Noble for tabulations; Charles Ennes and other teachers at Bozeman Junior High School, and Linda Shadiow at Bozeman Senior High for reactions and interpretation; Jerry Coffey, Arthur Coffin, and Duane Hoynes at Montana State University for supplementary information and interpretation. We also wish to thank Bill Ferguson, State Supervisor of English in Helena, for distribution of the questionnaires and ongoing support.

J.B.F.

INTERIM REPORT: MONTANA ENGLISH TEACHER PREPARATION AND NEEDS

1. Respondents:

Questionnaires sent out : 750
Questionnaires returned : 332 - 43% (325 tabulated on most items)

Distribution:

	High School (10-12)			Junior High (7-9)			Totals		
Mr.	61	(33%)	men	47	(33%)	men	108	(33%)	men
Mrs.	83	(67%)		76	(81%)		159	(74%)	
Miss	34	(28%)	123(67%)	14	(14%)	94 (67%)	48	(22%)	217 (67%)
Ms. (pref.)	6	(5%)	women	4	(5%)	women	10	(4%)	women
	184	(56%)		141	(44%)		325	(100%)	

In both Junior High and High School English, about one-third of the teachers are men. Our sense is that the proportion of male teachers has increased somewhat in recent years, which is advantageous because students can see an intellectual image associated with men as well as women. Boys especially might otherwise associate academic achievement and adult intellectual competence and sensitivity with women only, hence lowering their own self-esteem and objectives as they move through school. Conversely, the positive effects of the adult male presence in schools may be neutralized if the male teacher shows himslef as authoritarian and opposed to intellectual inquiry. We have abundant evidence nationally that too many teachers, both male and female, are more interested in keeping order than in the education of the student. Fortunately, the responses on the questionnaires show a high level of interest in finding ways to motivate children and to help them to learn. Only the occasional questionnaire response shows the passion for obeying orders, for keeping "immoral" material out of the hands of students, and for other highly regimented approaches to teaching. No sex-related pattern emerges from the questionnaires on attitudes, role, and values in relation to teaching.

A further hypothesis on the proportion of male teachers concerns salary inducements to continue in a teaching career. In many cases, the male teacher sees his teaching as a stepping stone to a higher-paying administrative position, both for higher prestige and for better support of his family. It is difficult for a male in a "bread-winner" family role to stay in teaching unless the family has a second income. Hence, although the proportion of male teachers might have increased somewhat in the recent years of public-service rather than materialistic orientation, it is likely to remain low, unless the scarcity of jobs elsewhere pushes men into stronger competition with women for the few teaching jobs available. Traditionally, women have competed successfully with men for school teaching jobs, ironically because they have been able or willing to settle for the low rates of pay.

The irony extends further when we see teachers' salary rates matching best with second-income family situations. A wife goes to work teaching in order to supplement the husband's income more than to pursue a professional career of her

own. There are exceptions, of course, but one cannot expect strong motivation for professional growth when the real motive is the paycheck, especially if the teacher is also overloaded with 125-150 students. This situation can lead to an exploitation of women and a wage-slave climate that is quite incompatible with increased professionalism among teachers of English. One has to admire the teachers who do try to grow professionally and personally under these constraints.

In Junior High School English teaching, the proportion of married women reaches 81%, more than half of all teachers, male and female. Although we do not know how many of these have families to support or how many are providing a second family income, we can infer that many or most of these women teach in or near the community where the husband is employed, and that much teacher recruitment and retention is tied to local availability. Again, the possibilities for increased professionalism may be compromised, except in large communities which have a larger and more diverse pool of teaching talent when vacancies occur. We cannot say that school systems are ignoring teachers with superior qualifications, however. They obviously try to hire and retain the best they can find. But the schools do seem to prefer local products for availability and fiscal convenience. The 70% of Montana English teachers who have in-state degrees (see #3) would seem to confirm this pattern. Since it is unlikely that the pattern of localism and available woman power will change, the state is therefore obliged to train and equip new and in-service teachers to the fullest possible extent, and the equipping will have to include the kinds of resourcefulness and high sight-setting that will make these people spirited and effective teaching professionals rather than mere wage-earners. For this to happen, there will have to be incentives that are personally felt by the teachers, plus the incentives of external recognition for merit and growth.

At present, the universities and colleges especially are remiss in not setting specific guidelines for professional training, growth, and achievement. We would do well to develop and recommend specific courses and in-service workshops which are aimed at the harried, wage-earning kind of teacher who is not much motivated or equipped to seek professional fulfillment while earning that wage. Courses and workshops which merely purvey ready-made (and often unusable) canned goods to these teachers are perpetuating the pattern by not enabling the teachers to develop individual approaches, methods, and materials on their own. In consequence, many of the teachers feel incapable and then defensive about their situations, which leads to reduced initiative, habit fixity, and a dependent, employee mentality.

The open comments on the questionnaires provide the evidence for these assertions. The typical teacher is in effect saying, "Look, I have to teach 150 kids to earn my pay, and I'm not getting materials or methods handed to me that I can use. Help me!" To this, we would have to respond that the teacher is capable of working out effective methods and materials for himself, if he can find a way to recognize and harness his capabilities. Here is where we in the universities can provide real assistance, not only in the subject competence, but also individualized experience in the integration of mind, creativity, and resources.

The above observations seem to go beyond a mere distribution table, until one associates some of the later data and comment. Our purpose in setting forth so much now on #1 is to establish some keynotes for discussion of the subsequent items on the questionnaire.

2. Teaching Assignment:

Teach English only:	134	(42%)
Teach one other subject :	144	(44%)
Teach more than one other subject :	45	(14%)

Distribution (one item from each):

Speech	27	Journalism	9	Humanities	2
History	15	Art	7	Home Ec	2
PE/coach	15	German	6	Aviation	2
Drama/Thtr	14	Music	4	Forensics	2
Read/Spell	14	Math	4		
Spanish	11	Psych	4	1 each: Health, Geography, Latin & Greek, Consumer Ed., Mass Media, Government, Broadcasting.	
Social Stud.	10	Counsel	3		
Librarian	10	Business	3		
French	10	Mythology	2		

- 29 subjects

The first problem to note here is the trend toward further fragmentation of the curriculum. Two teachers reported they taught only Reading, and ten others returned blank questionnaires, since they did not consider Reading teachers to be English teachers. In like manner, many teachers saw Speech, Drama & Theatre, Journalism, Forensics, and even Mythology and Humanities as apart from English and apart from each other. Since the advent of elective and mini-courses in the schools, sub-specialties have emerged which are more and more considered to be separate subjects. As far as Reading is concerned, most teachers do not feel prepared to teach it, they do not know how to handle it, and they are likely therefore if they can to leave it to a specialist. Teachers at different grade levels and in different subject areas tend either to assume or at least to hope that the reading problem will get taken care of somewhere else. The same holds true of Composition, in which again few teachers feel adequately trained or able to handle such activity. In our view, and in that of many people interviewed, work in reading, composition, and language should be closely integrated with work in the content area, be it English, Social Studies, or whatever. While it is utopian to expect a History or Science teacher to do much with Reading or Composition, we can do a better job of training teachers of English to do such work and have it integrated with (e.g.,) literary study. Even to "do a unit" on Grammar or "Creative Composition" is to dissociate one element of the student's mind from others and to encourage compartmentalization. Later one can hear such students saying they like Literature, but dislike Poetry and Composition, or that they can't see the connection between Mass Media and persuasive Rhetoric.

One solution to this problem of fragmentation is for prospective teachers of English to take courses like "Secondary School Reading in the Content Area" and Methods of Teaching Reading on a recommended rather than elective basis. And in line with comments made under #1, their own self-awareness of reading and compositional aspects of college English course work should be encouraged. The more advanced courses in English for prospective teachers should place more stress on re-integration of disciplinary components.

The data given above supports the obvious teaching assignment pattern, in which the majority of teachers will have at least one specialized assignment outside the main English teaching, usually based upon the qualified teaching minor. We see no problem with this pattern, so long as the second teaching assignment does not crowd out the first in terms of improving teaching effectiveness and keeping up with important developments in the field of English. Contrary to expectations, nearly all of those responding to the questionnaire have at least the equivalent of an English teaching major. If there is any substantial number of people whose major is in another subject and who teach English only part time or on a substitute basis, such people did not return their questionnaires.

The relative strength of the English or English teaching major will be discussed under #7, but it should be noted here that many Montana English teachers are qualified to teach another subject, and a slight majority of them in fact do such teaching regularly. A few innovative minds broke out of the pattern and reported that they teach "Everything--it's all related to English" or "attitudes and habits involved in living," or "Skills and values." No one said simply that he taught kids.

3. Undergraduate Degree:

U of M	72	(31%)		Rocky Mtn. area	12	
MSU	50	(21%)		West Coast	10	
EMC	36	(15%)		Southwest	10	Out-of-
WMC	26	(12%)	In-state degrees	Midwest	33	state
NMC	13	(5%)	70% of total	East	31	degrees
Carroll	13	(5%)		Misc.	3	30%
CGF	11	(3%)				
Rocky	7	(2%)				
			B.A. in English	147	(55%)	
			B.S. in Education	118	(45%)	

So far, no study has been made of the number of out-of-state people who came to Montana, got their degrees, and then remained to teach here. Nor have we determined how many Montanans went out-of-state to get their degrees. But it seems obvious that the school system in the state is quite parochial, with 70% of the degrees secured locally, presumably by local people. The picture is modified somewhat by recent in-migration of teachers from other parts of the country, but our state currently does not offer the same variety of teacher backgrounds that can be observed in more densely populated metropolitan areas. Many questions arise from this about differing points of view and different ways of thinking that a student can encounter in Montana schools. Since such differences are especially important in the field of English, we should at least make certain that homegrown teachers get maximum exposure to such differences, particularly as Montana's historical isolation is not likely to continue, and as many graduates of Montana schools and colleges will be living in other parts of the country.

The figures given above also reflect the traditional domination of English teacher training by the University of Montana, plus a surprisingly large number of MSU graduates, considering that its English degree program only began in 1965. Traditional also is the training of teachers in the local regions of the state by the former normal schools, EMC, Northern, and Western. A very difficult

conflict exists between geographical requirements and limited resources, which are often spread thinly among these units of the Montana system. The thinness of subject preparation, discussed under #7, seems related to the distribution of in-state degrees among relatively small institutions with limited offerings. This problem may be offset somewhat by the teachers' postgraduate study reported under #4, but we cannot say that any unit of the Montana college and university system is at present offering an undergraduate program that meets the NCTE Guidelines, particularly in the areas of Language, Composition, and Integrated Studies with teaching implications. Fortunately, the staff improvements and program revision plans at the two universities, which were mentioned earlier, promise better English degrees for teachers in the near future.

Finally, on the B.A. vs. B.S. degree, the trend moves increasingly toward B.A. in English, with appropriate Education courses and practicum for certification. Montana State, for example, no longer offers a B.S. in Education with English Teaching concentration. This trend reflects a larger national trend of the 1960s toward heavier subject matter concentration for prospective teachers and toward specific control of the English Education component of Secondary Education programs by English departments in the Liberal Arts or Letters and Science college of a university. Although many individual English faculty still ignore this new departmental function and related obligations, English departments generally have now recognized special curricular needs for teachers of Secondary English.

4. Graduate Study:

Post-baccalaureate Study

None	54	16%
Little	48	14%
Moderate	164	49%
Much	63	21%

Master's Degrees

M.A. in English	: 19
M.S. in Education	: 32
*Other	: 21
	**72

*e.g., 5 in Guidance,
6 in Speech
**=22% if distributed one to each;
7;1 ratio are High School teachers

Source of Master's Degrees

U of M	: 20
MSU	: 7
Carroll	: 1
EMC	: 3
WMC	: 1
Out-of-state	: 29

From the data, we see that 70% of the teachers reporting have done a moderate or large amount of postbaccalaureate study, much of which we can assume has been for renewal of certification. Item #11 (Workshops, Extension, Summer courses) will show more clearly what kind of additional study has been done recently.

The 72 reported Master's degrees (22%), taken as a whole, show a widespread tendency toward professional upgrading among English teachers. Most of these degrees, however, are not in English, but in Education and other fields. A complete tally showed 17 degrees in English of the 72, with 19 in Secondary Education unspecified, 6 in Adminstration, 4 in Guidance, 7 in Reading, 5 in English Education and 3 others miscellaneous. The remaining degrees were in other subject fields, like History, Speech, and Drama It is clear from the questionnaires that increasing one's options is the principal motive for teachers in getting an advanced degree. A second and important motive is increasing one's eligibility for administrative positions, the only way that most teachers can secure significantly higher salary and prestige. No study could be made from the data of what different positions these holders of advanced degrees had actually secured. An approximately equal number of men and women reported some kind of Master's degree in hand.

Further study reveals that 9 of the 72 Master's degree holders did their graduate work out of state after in-state baccalaureate study. 29 people did both undergraduate and graduate degrees within Montana. 17 came from out of state to graduate school in Montana, although we could not determine how many of these were originally Montanans. The remaining 17 did all of their degree work out of state. Thus, 46 of 72 have Montana graduate degrees, 38 have Montana undergraduate degrees, and 34 have out-of-state undergraduate degrees. One cannot say therefore that graduate degree programs are lacking in Montana or that very many people are driven out of state to get a graduate degree, but at present only UM has a degree program in any way approximating the NCTE preparation guidelines for English teachers, and it enrolls approximately 15 students. Our survey indicates a very high level of interest in an expanded graduate offering in English, if the program were appropriate for teachers and if it were accessible for teachers in service. Inappropriateness and inaccessibility of one kind of degree program may be an important reason why teachers seek a way out of English teaching into other fields, or a reason why so few teachers with B.A.'s only are not working on a Master's in English. Eliminating teachers about to retire, teachers with tenure who couldn't be dragged back to school, and teachers obviously too strapped financially in their personal situations to go back even if they wanted to, we would estimate that 200-300 teachers in Montana could (and many of these would) benefit from an appropriate and accessible graduate degree program in English. The alternative of graduate degrees in Education or in other subject fields, the route most commonly taken now, is not going to remedy the kinds of subject matter deficiency shown later in this report, nor is it going to realize the goal of significantly improved English instruction in the schools. The teachers are doing some non-degree post-baccalaureate study, but the offering at present is very thin in substantive areas of Literature, Language, and Composition. How to improve the offering, whether by new graduate courses and degree programs, or by other means, is one of the basic objectives of this survey and report.

5. Teaching Credential:

Class I: Professional-Administrative	43	14%
Class II: Standard-Secondary	201	61%*
Others	10	3%
Unreported or ambiguous	71	22%

*Many or most of these carry various endorsements, and holders are meeting renewal requirements.

When asked what type(s) of teaching credentials they held, many respondents either did not know or were not attuned to the various categories of state certification. One could possibly conclude that some of these people were not thinking much about their professional status.

Since the majority of teachers are at least keeping up with renewal requirements on Class II certificates by taking additional courses, we face a basic choice situation: are these teachers going to continue to take largely redundant professional methods and theory courses in the summer, or are they going to take courses which will really upgrade their command of the subject matter and related implications for teaching? If the summer offerings in the latter direction were better in Montana, they say, they would take anything available that was both substantial and useful. The open comments on the questionnaire express widespread dissatisfaction with (1) "mickeymouse" summer courses in Education, and (2) literature and other English courses being either unavailable or too remote from their teaching concerns. A minority of teachers will always pick up the easiest credits they can get for renewal, but most respondents showed a real interest in and need for substantial course work in English rather than for additional professional courses. If more and better English courses for teachers were available in the summer, it seems clear from the questionnaires that teachers would take more than the minimum 8 credits per 5 years needed for renewal. It seems likely also that a substantial number of teachers would feel that they might as well try for an advanced degree in English, if the program were accessible and applicable to their needs. From other sources, we cannot resolve conflicting reports on some school systems not hiring or retaining highly qualified teachers because of the salary differential. If this is the case in any particular school system, we in the university can only deplore the loss to the quality of instruction for the students and communities involved. At the same time, we would recommend that the universities urge further specification of the kinds of course work needed for renewal of the Class II certificate.

6. Professional Memberships:

MATE	81	*24%	*cf. 25% (188/750) known statewide--large increase since 1971.
NCTE	67	20%	
Others	203	**62%	**MEA, etc.--mostly union or state/local associations
Blank	43	14%	
"None"	25	7%	

Considering that English teachers all over Montana are complaining that they need and are not getting fresh ideas and approaches for their teaching, it is ironic to see so few NCTE members. A whole segment of the English teaching community is apparently cut off from the English Journal and all of the other NCTE materials and resources, except what might be floating around in school. In like manner, the MATE Newsletter, which contains an abundance of materials, guidelines, and "good news," reaches only one quarter of the teachers in Montana thus far. Aside from the loss of resources described above. we have to conclude that the level of professionalism among Montana English teachers, while improving, remains disappointingly low. For many teachers, the orientation is still mainly local and parochial, out of touch with what is going on statewide and nationally. Lest teachers reading this report take offense, we hasten to add that a similar problem obtains among college-level teachers, and that anyone who is concerned

about the problem is probably not a part of it himself. In any case, we face a three-fold obstacle in this state: too busy, too poor, and too apathetic are too many teachers. Yet, working just for the paycheck and not for growth could be no satisfaction.

7. Course Preparation - Table I: Summary Percentage Rankings (Literature)

Completed		Considered Important for Teaching	
1. Engl. Lit since 1660	86%	1. Modern Novel	50%=up 3rd to 1st;-14%
2. " " before 1660	80%	2. Mythology	50%=up 8th to 2nd;+11%
3. Modern Novel	64%	3. Modern Poetry	48%=up 5th to 3rd;-4%
4. World Literature	63%	4. Modern Drama	40%=up 6th to 4th;-8%
5. Modern Poetry	52%	5. Engl. Lit since 1660	40%=dn 1st to 4th;-40%
6. Modern Drama	48%	6. Literary Criticism	40%=up 7th to 4th;-6%
7. Literary Criticism	46%	7. Psychology & Lit.	40%=up 11th to 4th;+30%
8. Mythology	39%	8. World Literature	39%=dn 4th to 8th;-24%
9. Ancient Epic	27%	9. Science Fiction	38%=up 12th to 9th;+32%
10. Bible as Literature	19%	10. Bible as Literature	35%= same rank; +16%
11. Psychology & Lit.	10%	11. Engl. Lit before 1660	31%=dn 2nd to 11; -49%
12. Science Fiction	6%	12. Ancient Epic	27%=dn 9th to 12; same
13. Women's Literature	3%	13. Women's Literature	26%= same rank +23%

For this part of the survey, we selected representative courses which we would call basic and archetypal (Mythology, Bible, World Lit.), modern genres (Fiction, Drama, Poetry), and ancient genre (Epic), historical survey (English Lit.), critical approaches, and "new interest areas" (Science Fiction, Psych. and Lit., Women's Lit.). We assumed that most teachers would have had American Literature surveys and genres and would consider them important for teaching.

The comparison of percentages of those having taken a particular course with those considering it important for teaching shows some striking realignments. The English Literature survey courses sink way down in importance, especially the early period course. Evidently these courses were taken by the teachers too early in their academic careers for them to consider possible teaching relevance later. It is likely too that these courses offered material that did not stick with the then-students very long, and that these courses, and most other literature courses for that matter, were not taught in a manner such that a prospective teacher could see ways of applying those works and insights to the teaching of school literature. At issue here is the need in teacher preparation for training in transferring and integrating disparate material. As students or trainees, few people are going to know their exact needs in the future, and without integrative, adaptive training and experience even in introductory courses, they are very likely going to be unable to see the importance of the material in later years, because they don't see the application to other contexts. The same is true of course work in Mythology, Bible, Epic, and World Literature. Of these, only Mythology seems to have been recognized to be of basic, underlying importance for the study of all literature at all levels.

The small percentages of people who have taken courses in the bottom half of the list reflect a serious problem in most Montana College English programs: the offering is very limited, confined usually to a set of "standard" courses in a set curriculum, without much opportunity for variety or breadth. In turn, we have the problem of generally thin preparation in literature. Sampling of

individual questionnaires shows that the typical respondent has taken only four or five of the courses listed above. Typically they have completed the equivalent of an English major, but it has very little depth in literature, and only the most recent graduates have had even enough exposure to "new interest areas" to be able to judge their importance. The table definitely shows a large demand for in-service course work in the new material, plus an awareness that the now fashionable Mythology was missed before.

Course Preparation (continued) Table II: Summary Percentage Rankings (Composition)

Completed		Considered Important for Teaching	
1. Expository Wr. beyond Freshman	71%	1. Eval. Std. Writing	64%=up 4th to 1;+38%
2. Creative Writing	46%	2. Creative Writing	52%= same; +6%
3. Journalism	30%	3. Expos. beyond Fr.	44%=dn 1 to 3; -37%
4. Evaluation of Student Writing	26%	3. Analysis of Wr.	44%=up 5th to 3;+23%
5. Analysis of Writing	21%	4. Journalism	32%=dn 3rd to 4;+2%
6. Technical Writing	16%	5. Rhetoric for Tchrs.	29%=up 7th to 5;+15%
7. Rhetoric for Teachers	14%	5. Technical Writing	29%=dn 6th to last; +13%

For this part of the survey, we selected courses which we would call either essential for teaching composition or important for a related teaching assignment. Without standard nomenclature in this area, the results are less accurate than for the literature courses, but certain patterns are very clear.

Evaluation of student writing, one of the principal headaches for teachers, tops the list as a practical course need. With only 26% of the teachers having had such a course, we can see the wide gap between preparation and need. Another gap, which is not so evident from the teachers' repsonses, concerns Analysis of Writing and Rhetoric for Teachers, courses which can be closely related, even as a single course. During the 1960s, the Commission on English developed N.D.E.A. Summer Institute courses in this area, recognizing that few teachers have ever had a formal investigation of rhetoric with implications for teaching. Teachers without such experience are understandably unaware of the importance of such preparation for their teaching. We are talking about the difference between ready-made, possibly ill-understood or inappropriate instructional materials grabbed off the shelf and enough understanding of the principles and elements of rhetoric for the teacher to select or develop the most appropriate materials and methods for a given situation.

The decline in rank and percentage for Expository Writing beyond Freshman level indicates a problem related to the above: prospective and in-service teachers of English generally have not been much concerned about development of their own writing abilities. Often they do no writing themselves of the kind they ask their students to do. The Commission on English Composition courses for teachers showed conclusively that (1) a teacher made to work on his/her own writing is likely to gain a healthy appreciation for the problems students have, (2) a teacher with this experience can see more ways of helping students to write, and (3) most teachers hate to be put through the same wringer they put their students through, but afterward they are likely to convert a wringer to an avenue of approach.

Creative Writing and related "Creative Composition" have helped to liberate teachers and students alike from rigid conventions which may be incompatible with

needs, interests, and writing purposes. Once clear, emphatic thinking is recognized as more important than editorial correctness, and once the flexibility of alternatives available to professional writers is studied, more teachers can recognize that Creative Writing is a legitimate avenue to effectiveness even in conventional writing situations. So far about half of the teachers surveyed seem to recognize these principles, an encouraging sign that Creative Writing is less often regarded as a fun-and-games sideline to serious instruction.

Generally the teachers seem to want, and certainly need, much more course work in the composition area.

Course Preparation (continued) Table III: Summary Percentage Rankings (Language)

Completed		Considered Important for Teaching	
1. Introd. Linguistic Concepts	58%	1. Dialects and Usage	35%=up last to 1st;+25%
2. Hist. English Language	54%	1. Survey Mod. Grammars	35%=up 3rd to 1st;-5%
3. Survey Modern Grammars	40%	3. Introd. Linguistics	32%=dn 1st to 3;-26%
4. Semantics	20%	3. Hist. Engl. Language	32%=dn 2d to 3; -22%
5. Dialects and Usage	10%	3. Semantics	32%= same; +22%

Here is one of the big disaster areas in the survey. Not only have teachers received little course preparation in the language area, but also relatively few of them consider such courses to be important for teaching.

Dialects and Usage, a relatively new course offering, which is still scarce because of the scarcity of linguists and low priority in English programs, has been recognized by many teachers as needed and important. The same is true of Semantics, among those who are aware of what such study entails.

Grammar and grammars remain a muddle and a thorn in the side of nearly everyone, as the open comments show. Most teachers have had only prescriptive school grammar, and even that not since their own school days. Others either in college courses or in workshops have tried to cope with the complexities of structural and generative-transformational grammars, with results similar to the prevailing despair over the new Math. To teach grammar at all, or what grammar to teach, and in what form--these are questions which often cause the ostrich-in-the-sand response among teachers. What is needed is a grammar course which will clarify aspects and features of grammar so that these realizations can be put into practical, effective use in the classroom. Only recently have linguists begun to enter the area of application of their findings, hence the lag in appropriate teacher preparation. The development of new materials for language study in the schools is no solution by itself if the teacher using them has little understanding of the underlying principles and thus little ability to adapt or manipulate these materials for specific needs.

Although many teachers have had some kind of introductory linguistics course, it is clear that either the course was too insubstantial to have lasting benefit, or that it was too remote from practical teaching implications. We see many such courses as existing in a technical and theoretical compartment as far as the student is concerned. This problem underscores the need for integrative humanistic training in college and university. Without it, the student who will later teach has no method of tying in disparate material with his immediate teaching concerns.

Summary on Course Preparation: The heavy concentration on literature in most college curricula has certainly hurt the related teaching effectiveness in language and composition. College English seems typically to have failed to prepare a student for actual teaching needs, in part because of poor liaison between College and Secondary English. Teachers generally cite their need for practical and immediately useful methods, which their college courses did not offer them. Because they have not had college-level subject matter taught to them in linkage with teaching implications, they tend to regard those College English courses as maybe stimulating but rather esoteric for their present teaching activity. Cavalier disregard by English Departments of "methods" and of integrative training, plus dissociation of Education Departments from disciplinary substance in English add up to inadequate teacher preparation, which filters all the way down to the elementary school pupil of 1974 who will be the college professor or high school teacher of 1994.

8. Teachers' Views of Further Preparation Needed; Intentions to Pursue:

In the literature area, although World Literature was lower on the scale of considered importance than the completion percentage, it topped the list of those courses mentioned as needed. Next in line came courses in Modern Literature, Literary Criticism, Drama, "Methods," Poetry, and Mythology, highly rated in importance, a distant last. Evident here is the felt need for preparation in areas in which teachers have a new teaching assignment, as in the new mini-courses on Modern Literature, and in areas of particular teaching difficulty, as in Poetry.

Both here and in the open comment section, teachers frequently cited the need for workable and effective methods, in some cases complaining that the questionnaire set up nothing about Methods courses. Since we were working with assumption that methods and other teaching implications could be integrated within a subject matter course, we were curious to see how many teachers were mainly methods-oriented. Without any definite figures on this point, we see perhaps half of the teachers as extremely preoccupied with methods, and otherwise oriented toward ready-made "solutions" for their immediate practical needs. "What do I do tomorrow? Help!" is the general message one receives from them--understandably so, considering the typical teaching loads and massive consumption rate of "creative" project ideas. Most teachers would concede that they need further subject matter course preparation, but few would tolerate any more courses that were isolated from their own classroom worlds. "It's up to you as a teacher to work out your own adaptations of this subject matter" is a desirable but rather utopian position for the college professor to take. We would hope that the professor would first help prospective teachers to develop ways of adapting the material before saying that it is up to them.

"Which of the above do you seriously intend to pursue?" In the negative area, 94 of 160 made no response, 7 were not sure, and 59 said "none at present," making 48% veering away from further preparation. In the literature area, 56, or 16% gave vague, general references, such as "General Literature," "Modern Literature," and associated Literature, Language and Composition. From the manner of the responses, we conclude that some teachers do have serious intentions, but only those who are already involved in advanced degree programs seemed to have any definite plans. This is not necessarily to blame the teahcers. One of the most telling responses we received was "it depends of what is offered." If the offering is thin, especially in the summer, how can one make definite plans?

The same picture emerges for the composition and language areas. "More knowledge" about composition was an expressed need frequently found, then methods again, and evaluation of student writing. For language, "Grammar" and "Methods" reflect the general weakness of preparation and the teacher's feeling of inadequacy in the face of curriculum demands. No one yet seemed to have any word on applied grammar teaching in other contexts, thinking of it instead as a discrete item that one usually is not prepared to teach but has to teach. As they described their intentions, quite a number of teachers saw a Language-Comp-Methods package as desirable, but no one saw Literature also in such a package.

On actual pursuits, 13 reported they were in Master's degree programs, 5 of which were in English, and the others scattered in related fields. Six people stated that they were either enrolled or about to begin doctoral programs, mostly in Education. Nine people reported pursuit of studies on their own, and 16 reported pursuits outside English, such as Guidance. Many others said they would take some or any courses if they were offered nearby as extension courses or whatever. Paucity of offerings and geographical distance are not helping follow-up study in Montana.

9. Pressure from Superintendent or Principal to Upgrade Level of Training:

No response	40	12%
No Pressure	182	57%
Some Pressure	75	23%
Much pressure	11	3%
Encouragement or self-pressure	18	5%

Since the majority of teachers hold Class II credentials, which need periodic renewal and additional course work, and since the majority also report no pressure from superintendent or principal, we can assume that all parties involved are going along with the system without much said about it. If more pressure is needed, the state would first have to commit itself more seriously to implementing the NCTE Guidelines by specifying what gaps have to be filled for certification and renewal. Teachers, superintendents, and principals cannot be expected to work for upgrading themselves if there is no specifically higher standard to be met. Those communities and school districts which are trying to upgrade preparation of teachers and quality of curriculum anyway are to be commended. This report represents our initiative in the university to press for more specification of what a fully prepared English teacher needs for the state of Montana. In doing so, we recognize our obligation to develop the kinds of programs that will meet these specifications, and we urge the people of the state to recognize the need and to support the programs with proper funding.

10. Visiting Consultants:

"How would you regard visiting consultants in your school?"

No response	10%
Mixed reaction	4%
Rather negatively	5%
OK if very good and prepared	11%
Very positively	60%

A small minority of teachers were mixed or negative on consultants for one of two reasons: either they felt threatened by the prospect of possibly negative feedback from strangers, or they felt strongly self-sufficient and sceptical of possible meddling from outsiders. Evidently some teachers thought of a consultant as some kind of spy of Gestapo-type, brought in by "Them" to develop sinister fitness reports. Others recognized that the whole consultant idea would be worthless unless (1) the person were invited in by the teachers, (2) the consultant were well-informed about school situations and sensitive to the position of the teachers, and (3) the consultant were disposed to assist and provide resources in a non-dictatorial manner. Particularly noteworthy here was the evident desperation of teachers in the smaller, more isolated school districts, desperation for contact with helpful knowledge and ideas. In general, the teachers who showed themselves happy, confident, and secure in their work welcomed the idea of a consultant. One wonders what bad experiences the more hostile teachers have had, or who has threatened to push them around. As the frequency and scope of consultative work between school and university people increases, we think that there will be very great mutual benefit and understanding.

11. Workshops, Extension, Summer Courses:

Workshops	Have attended recently		Would attend		Would not attend	
Methods	102	31%	154	47%	45	14%
Literature	86	26%	182	56%	23	7%
Language	49	15%	153	47%	39	12%
Composition	79	24%	193	59%	26	8%
Extension Courses	28	8%	106	32%	27	8%
Summer Courses						
Literature	43	14%	116	35%	37	11%
Language	26	8%	86	26%	36	11%
Composition	22	7%	123	37%	30	10%
Methods	37	11%	90	27%	35	11%

Where summer courses were taken:

UM: 94
MSU: 66
Other: 83

On the workshop offering, we can assume that a majority of the attendances reported have been at MEA/MATE sectionals, both at the state and regional conferences. Some other workshops are known to have been held at Missoula and Great Falls, and this year the State Superintendent's office sponsored a traveling tour of consultants for English in connection with the start of the school year at various larger towns and cities in the state. The level of interest in such workshops is obviously very high, and the open comments on the questionnaires plead for more, especially those which are well attuned to immediate teaching situation and needs. There is widespread complaint, particularly from the eastern part of the state, that too seldom are workshops offered which are accessible to people in that area.

There is an obvious demand for Extension courses, presumably courses which would meet in the evening for teachers in service, within easy driving range. Again, apart from Great Falls and Missoula, we do not see many courses of this kind being offered. In spite of the logistical difficulties, we recommend that units of the Montana University system actively pursue plans for Extension courses in English, including the necessary funding support and arrangements.

The small attendance at summer courses, with even a decline in recent years, reflects the paucity of the offerings. The situation of UM at Missoula is the most fortunate, with their extensive offering, including at least two courses per year for English teachers offered by Dick Adler. Montana State's situation is more typical of the others' we have many staff members able to offer interesting and useful summer courses, but each year our budget gets slashed some more, and the residue is scarcely worth the trip in many people's eyes. MSU is actively trying to introduce more summer courses of interest to English teachers as part of a self-supporting advanced degree program, the justification for which should be demonstrable from the results of this questionnaire. If in-service course preparation for English teachers in Montana is ever going to start its needed development, it will have to be in the summer, and this will require some administrative re-thinking on cost-beneficial budgeting. The numbers of Montana teachers for such summer courses are only the beginning. Teachers in densely populated metropolitan areas elsewhere are willing to spend money to get out of the steamy cities of the East to take courses in equally steamy cities in the Midwest, when for very little extra they could enjoy one of our Montana campuses. Meanwhile, if Missoula remains the only summer center for English study in the state, there will be Montana teachers unable or unwilling to travel that far who would prefer a decent offering at Billings or Bozeman.

12. Summer M.A. Program in Literature, Language, and Composition, Stressing Teaching Implications:

Who should offer such a program:

UM	83	25%	
MSU	48	14%	
Either	72	23%	(10 complained about distances and
Both	123	37%	financial difficulties)
EMC/NMC	2	1%	

From these opinions, it is clear that many people would have UM continue as the traditional center of graduate study in English for the state. But another 75% see a need for a graduate degree program elsewhere in addition. Some of these do not seem to care who offers the graduate degree, but the open comments show a general agreement that at least UM and MSU should have graduate degree programs in English, stressing teaching implications. The varieties of opinion are broken down as to personal interest, in the following table:

1. A good idea, and I think many people would be interested.....	191	58%
2. A good idea, but I don't think there would be much interest..	37	11%
3. Not much need for such a program at this time.....	3	1%
4. I would definitely be interested myself.....	75	23%

5. I might be interested in such a program.....94 28%
6. I do not think I would be interested.....69 22%
7. No response.....12 3%

There is always a difference, one respondent said, between what teachers say, and what they do, but the opinions expressed above at least show a great deal of general interest and a significant number of people who are definitely interested for themselves. The first need obviously is for a better course offering, and one good way of achieving it is to have a viable degree program to generate such courses. Whether Montana institutions will offer individual or cooperative Master's degree programs in English will depend in large part upon the recommendations of the Commission on Post-Secondary Education, but our findings establish a sufficiently large need and demand for more than the present single M.A. in English (Teaching) program offered in the state.

13. University Assistance Services - Most Frequently Cited Items:

Good workshops
New materials
Extension graduate credit courses
Realistic summer course offering
Course of Literature for Adolescents
Better internship & methods program
Updated curriculum for teacher preparation
Media courses
Professors who know school situation
Visit remote school districts

We could lengthen this report with some of the more poignant open comment made by respondents, but the attitudes and needs of the teachers should be clear from what has been reported thus far. Let these three representative comments speak for others and serve as the conclusion to this report:

"I think my education was sadly lacking in any specific training for junior high level...."

"I sincerely hope the university system is sincere in its desire to be more valuable to the high school English teacher. It has been my experience that college instructors were experts, but rarely were they teachers. If we, as high school teachers, were to teach as we were taught in college, a rebellion would soon be brewing...."

"Revamp the English education program substantially by getting students in English Ed out of English Ed courses and into the schools as aids during the soph. or jr. year. Ed courses muddle in generalities that students couldn't possibly care about until actually faced with the specific problems they'll face as teachers."

To these comments, university people in English and in Education might reply: "We are doing better now than we have in the past, but there is a long way to go." We can first set a good example of communication and interaction across the compartmental barriers that have existed in the past. But everyone involved, in school and university alike, can profit from Pogo's rueful observation: "We have met the enemy and they is US!"